



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF INDIAN WOMEN - A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Indian women have achieved a lot in various areas but in reality they have to still travel a long way. They have to prove themselves that they are on par with men. But their path is full of roadblocks. They are still facing many problems. Malnutrition, poor health, maternal mortality, low education, male dominance, lack of power, early marriage, multiple responsibility, problems of property rights, sexual harassment are some social and health problems of the Indian women. This study is made to highlight these problems of Indian women. The study suggested to bring change in Indian culture and mind set of male members.

KEYWORDS

Indian Women, Health, Social Problems.

INTRODUCTION

Women in India made extraordinary bravery to make the British rulers out of country. Rani Lakshmi Bai, Vannake Vobbavva and Kittur Rani Channamma were showed their extraordinary skill to fight against Britishers to bring independence in India. There are many examples of women who are at the helm in Indian society. India has the largest number of professionally qualified women and the largest number of working women in the world. India has more number of women doctors, surgeons, professors, scientists, sport persons, singers, social saints and industrialists. There is more number of women who participated and presently involved themselves actively in all areas. Mrs. Indira Gandhi served as Prime Minister of India for a period of fifteen years and she is the world's longest women Prime Minister. Similarly, Smt Pratibha Patil becomes first women President of India and Meera Kumara becomes the first women Speaker of Loka Sabha. Mrs. Sonia Gandhi has heading the Indian National Congress. P.T. Usha in sports, Lata Mangeshkar in singing, Arundati Roy in literature, Kiran Majumdar in corporate sector, Mother Teresa in social reforms and Kalpana Chawla in science, etc, reached height in their fields by putting all efforts. They have proved themselves that they are superior in their area.

The constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality, no discrimination by the state, equality of opportunity and equal pay for equal work. The government has passed resolution to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in all areas. Today one can see the women participation in Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat and Zill Panchayat and many seats of chairman and president are reserved for women in Karnataka State.

The status of Indian women has low as compared to the status of women in the world. The below table highlight the status of the Indian women.

Social Indicator	India	World
Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births	73	60
Maternal mortality rate per 100000 live births	570	430
Female literacy (%)	58	77.6
Female school enrollment	47	62
Earned income by female member (%)	26	58
Underweight children (%)	53	30
Total fertility rate	3.2	2.9
Women in government (%)	6	7
Contraception usage (%)	44	56
Low birth weight babies (%)	33	17

The table shows that the Indian women are much behind as compared to rest of the world. This indicates that the Indian women are suffering from many health and social problems. Therefore, it is felt to examine what problems the Indian women are facing in this present competitive world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to highlight health and social problems of Indian women.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the secondary data collected from websites, newspapers and books and journals. The conceptual framework of health and social problems of Indian women is developed based on the collected data.

ANALYSIS OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF INDIAN WOMEN

Women in India have been ill treated from the beginning. They are considered as weak part of the society and accordingly low treatment as compared to men. Male is treated on high priority even in taking food. Women are the one who eat last and least in the family. The women in India are prejudiced from the birth itself. They are not breastfed for long and female are not given proper attention in health and education. The workload on women is much higher than their counterpart. She has to meet the requirement of many people in the family at the same time. She has the multiple responsibility of taking care of children, husband and old age people in the family. In view of these, the following are the some important problems of Indian women.

MALNUTRITION

Generally in India, women are the one who eat last and least in the whole family. So they eat whatever is left after men folk satiated. As a result most of the times their food intake does not contain the nutritional value required in maintaining the healthy body. In villages, sometimes women do not get to eat the whole meal due to poverty. The UNICEF report of 1996 clearly states that the women of South Asia are not given proper care, which results in higher level of malnutrition among the women of South Asia than any where else in the world. This nutritional deficiency has two major consequences on women. Firstly they become anemic and secondly they never achieve their full growth, which leads to unending cycle of undergrowth as malnourished women cannot give birth to a healthy baby.

POOR HEALTH

The malnutrition results in poor health of women. The women of India are prejudiced from the birth itself. They are not breastfed for long. The women want to get pregnant as soon as possible to get male child which decreases the caring period to the female child. Women cannot go anywhere on their own if they want

and they have to take the permission of male member of family or have to take them along. This results in decrease in women's visit to doctors and she could not pay attention to her health.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

The mortality rate in India is highest in the world. The malnutrition and early marriage leads to gynecological problems in women. Further, early marriages leads pregnancies at younger age that makes them difficult to bear the burden of the child. The gynecological problems some times may become so serious that it may ultimately lead to death of women during delivery.

LACK OF EDUCATION

Women in India never got its due share of attention in education. They are supposed to fulfill domestic duties and education becomes secondary for them. The scenario in urban areas has changed a lot and women are opting for higher education. However, around 70 per cent of Indian population residing in villages.. The people of villages consider girls to be curse and they do not want to waste money and time by sending them to schools. They arrange marriage of their daughter immediately after maturity. The lack of education leads for many problems. Mother cannot look after her children properly and she is not aware of the deadly diseases and their cure. An uneducated person does not know the importance of health and hygiene.

MISTREATMENT

Women in India are subject to physical and mental violence. They are working more than men but the reward for them is very less. The women are not safe either at home or at workplace. Every hour a woman is raped in India and every 93 minutes a woman is burnt to death due to dowry problem. The women are mistreated even with lot of development in the Act.

OVERWORKED

Indian women work more than men but their work is hardly recognized. Their household duties are never counted as a work. The women working in a field to support her husband will also not counted as a work. A study conducted by Mies in 1986 states that in Andhra Pradesh a woman works around 15 hours a day during the agricultural season whereas a male work on an average for around 7-8 hours.

LACK OF POWER

In India a large percentage of women do not have power. They have no power to take decisions independently even related to their own life. They have to take permission of male members for each and every issue. They don't have any say in important household matters and not in matter of their own marriage.

MARRIAGE

The marriage of women is mainly fixed by the parents and old age people of the family in India. The girl is not consulted but is told to marry a boy whom her family has chosen. They are taught to abide by the whims and fancies of their husbands. Going against the wishes of husband is considered to be a sin. In marriage husband has always the upper hand.

DOWRY

Dowry is a serious issue. Courts are flooded with cases related to death due to dowry harassment by husband and in laws. Nowadays parents have to give hefty amount as dowry to boy at the time of marriage whether they can afford it or not. If a girl brings large amount of dowry she is given respect and is treated well in her new home and if she does not bring dowry according to expectations of her in laws then she has to suffer harassment. Due to this evil practice, many newly wed women of India have to lose their lives.

FEMALE INFANTICIDE/FOETICIDE

The sex of the unborn baby is determined with the help of technology and if it is a girl child then it is aborted down. In this entire procedure woman do not have any say and she has to act according to the wish of her husband even if she does not want to abort.

DIVORCE

The divorce rate in India is not so high as compared to western countries but it does not mean that marriages are more successful here. The reason behind low level of divorce rate is that it is looked down by the society. It is regarded as the sign of failure of marriage, especially of women. She is treated as if she has committed some crime by divorcing her husband.

LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

The women do not own any property in their own names and do not get a share of parental property in many families. They have no share in ancestral property as male in the past. However, after amendment of Hindu Law, they are getting share in ancestral property. The problem has risen due to share of property with male members in many families. The cordial relationship with brothers and sisters has declined.

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

Police records show high incidence of crimes against women in India. The National Crime Records Bureau reported in 1998 that the growth rate of crimes against women would be higher than the population growth rate by 2010. Official statistics show that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of reported crimes against women.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The sexual harassment has been rising at work place in Indian society. It is due to the influence of western culture on Indians.

CONCLUSION

Many women in India have reached to the height in different areas of Indian society. However, more numbers women are facing one or other problems from Indian culture. The culture of India has still traditional which don't accept change. Therefore, it is very essential to bring change in Indian culture to accommodate changes that are taking place in the world. The women should be treated on par with men because they also having life. There should not be any discrimination between men and women. More number of girls should given compulsory education to minimize the evils of the society. In addition, it is necessary to provide more reservation by amending the laws.

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